The Joint Commission's disease-specific care (DSC) certification process is a focused evaluation of a clinical treatment program. Certified programs demonstrate compliance with a set of core, consensus-based national standards; use of clinical practice guidelines; and performance measure data collection. Advanced certification in six clinical areas is also available. These programs must meet the core requirements for DSC certification plus additional, clinically specific requirements and expectations. In 2012 The Joint Commission revised and updated the DSC Certification Program core requirements to reflect current trends in chronic illness care. These revisions will apply to reviews conducted on or after July 1, 2013.

The Joint Commission founded the DSC Certification Program in 2002 on the Wagner Chronic Care Model's six essential elements, which emphasize community, the health system, self-management support, delivery system design, decision support, and clinical information systems. However, the management of chronic care and its associated conditions and treatments has evolved since the DSC program's introduction a decade ago.

To capture emerging DSC trends, The Joint Commission conducted a systematic literature review of modern disease management models and strategies. This extensive review identified—and subsequent field reviews and focus groups confirmed—the following areas to consider in enhancing the core DSC certification requirements:

- Involvement of an interdisciplinary team within a program
- Emphasis on the transition of the patient to different settings
- Prioritizing performance improvement in a way that demonstrates and sustains improvement and links performance improvement to clinical practice guidelines

- Creating a connection between a procedure or condition and the patient's chronic illness(es)
- Increased focus on self-management, such as patient-engagement level, lifestyle choices, and health and wellness

As part of the comprehensive review of the DSC requirements, The Joint Commission also modified the scoring categories for various elements of performance (EPs) and reordered several standards and EPs within the advanced programs. However, due to a national coverage decision by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the following two advanced programs will not transition to the new core standards:

- Advanced Disease-Specific Care Certification for Ventricular Assist Device Destination Therapy (VAD)
- Advanced Disease-Specific Care Certification for Lung Volume Reduction Surgery (LVRS)

These two advanced programs will retain the current core DSC certification standards.

Organizations can view the enhanced DSC core requirements on The Joint Commission's Prepublication Standards webpage at [http://www.jointcommission.org/standards_information/prepublication_standards.aspx](http://www.jointcommission.org/standards_information/prepublication_standards.aspx). The requirements will also appear in the 2013 Disease-Specific Care Certification Manual, scheduled for publication in March 2013, and in the spring 2013 E-dition® update.

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